



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Rabies Alert!

We are in the height of the season.

Dr. Robert Ricker, Delaware State Veterinarian, is warning the public to protect themselves and their families by staying away from wild animals and avoiding pets and domesticated animals that are acting strangely. These animals may have rabies which can cause a very painful death in humans if left untreated. If you have been bitten by an animal, the chance of rabies exists. Do not wait; call your doctor and/or go to the emergency room for treatment. The incubation period for the disease can be as short as two weeks. Once clinical signs develop, there is no cure. According to Dr. Ricker, the entire State of Delaware is a rabies endemic area.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The vast majority of rabies cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) each year occur in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes. Domestic animals account for less than 10% of the reported rabies cases, with cats, cattle, and dogs most often reported rabid." Infection can also occur by contamination of an open cut by saliva.

Rabies prevention beats rabies treatment!

1. Vaccinate your pets. All dogs, cats, and ferrets over 6 months old are to be vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian.
2. Stay away from wild animals.
3. Report stray dogs and cats to the Kent County SPCA - 1-888-3KCSPCA (1-888-352-7722)
4. Stay away from pets and/or domestic animals that are acting strangely.
5. If your pet or farm animal is acting strangely, call your veterinarian.
6. If you suspect that your pet or farm animal may have rabies, call the Bureau of Rabies Prevention, **Rabies Hotline: (302) 744-4545** at the Delaware Division of Public Health.
7. Rabies proof your home:
 - Remove sources of food from buildings and yards
 - Make sure garbage cans have tight-fitting, animal-proof lids.
 - When possible, put garbage cans in garage or shed
 - Feed pets indoors or if you feed them outside, remove any uneaten food right away.

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